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Some Essential Contributions of State Staff Members to Farm and Home Development

The administrative staff

State steering committee

Supervisors

Specialists

Additional contributions of

Management specialists

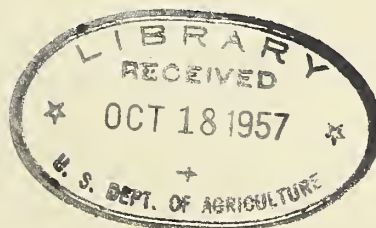
The 4-H staff

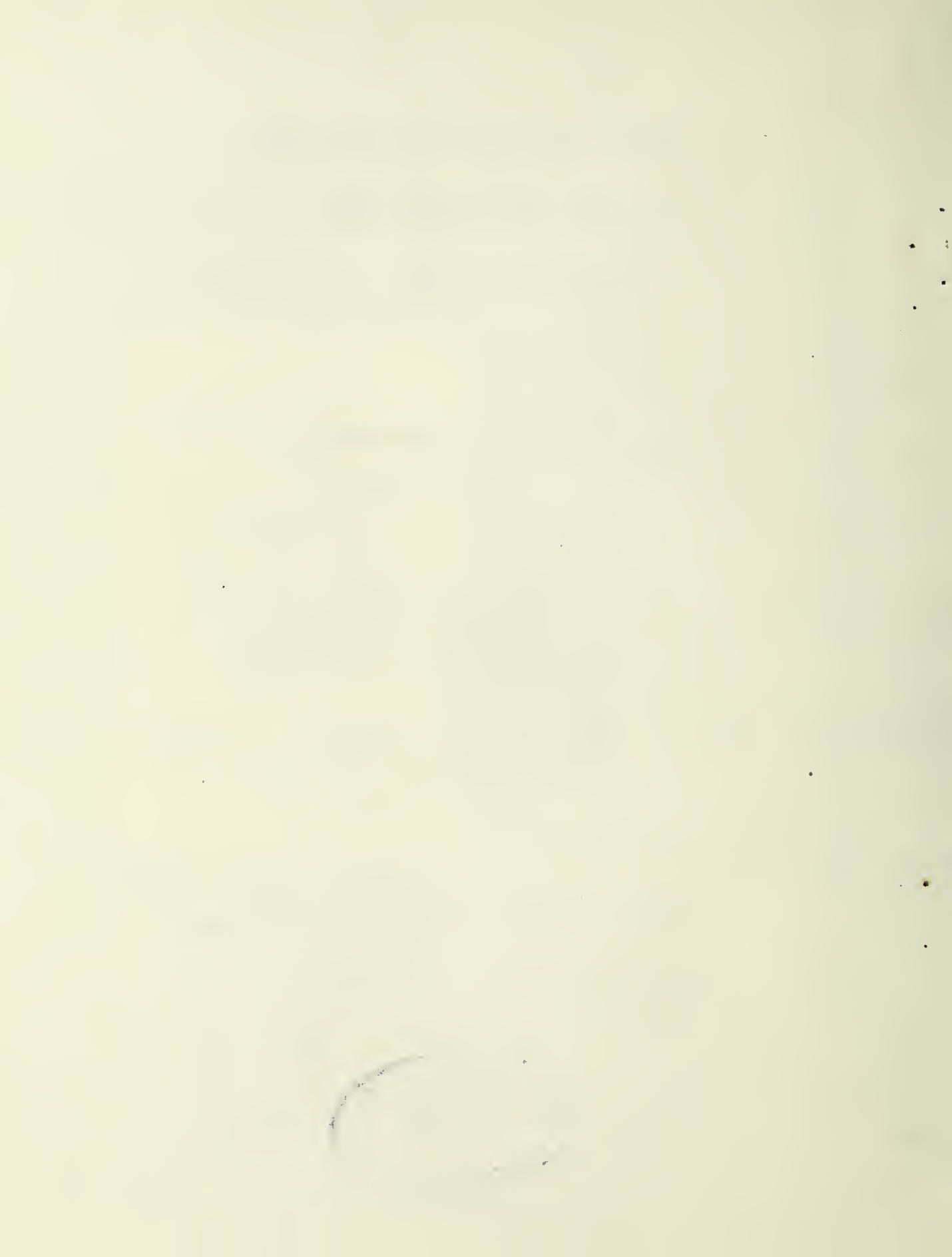
The information staff

Research and training staff

Federal Extension Service • U. S. Department of Agriculture

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HOW FARM AND HOME DEVELOPMENT DIFFERS FROM OTHER EXTENSION APPROACHES:

Farm and Home Development is both an extension teaching method and a process families may use in solving problems that are individual to them. As an extension teaching method it gives special emphasis to (1) the individual farm and home as the unit and the center of concern, (2) the coordination of economics and technology in solving problems of a particular farm and home, and (3) the testing of alternatives in a systematic way. Taken together, these three characteristics distinguish Farm and Home Development from all other methods used in extension education. *

WHY NEEDED:

Farm and Home Development provides extension workers a method for helping farm families apply research and education to their more difficult and consequential choices. Some typical examples of such choices are (1) "How can we best get a start in farming and making a home?," (2) "What crops should we grow and how many acres of each, and what kinds and how much livestock should we raise?," and (3) "How much money are we justified in borrowing to improve our house?" The complexity of these problems illustrate the need for an educational approach in which the family's resources, situation, aspirations, and alternatives form the central unit on which subject matter is focused.

Not all of the problems that confront farm people are of this type. General recommendations are very helpful to most farm people in solving many of their problems. Examples of such problems are: (1) "What insecticide should I use for controlling insect A on crop B with equipment C?," (2) "What variety of crop D yields best on soil E under condition F?," and (3) "What size and type of equipment is best for job G?". Extension approaches that emphasize general recommendations via mass media or other extension channels usually are appropriate for helping farm people with problems of this type. Farm and Home Development is not justified for use solely with such problems as these.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES REQUIRE DIFFERENT EXTENSION FUNCTIONS:

It can readily be seen that the purpose and nature of Farm and Home Development differs from the "general recommendations" approach to farm and home problems. Thus, extension specialists and agents must work differently with the two approaches, if work done through either approach is to be fully effective and helpful. Perhaps this is even more true for State staff members

* For a more complete explanation of Farm and Home Development see the leaflet "Earmarks of Farm and Home Development" -- IP-54 (4-56)

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than for county extension workers. Farm and Home Development requires county workers to search out the information that is needed by the family to solve its key problem or problems from the various subject-matter fields and other sources. Moreover, agents must help the family bring such information to bear on its problems. If they are to do this well, county workers must have appropriate help from the State staff. This help must include (1) presentations of certain types of subject matter in a form useful in comparing alternatives, rather than just in the form of general recommendations, (2) training in dealing with the entire farm and home as a unit, and (3) assistance in searching out the subject matter needed to solve typical farm and home problems from the several fields in which it is to be found, coordinating it, and applying it to the problems.

FUNCTIONS OF STATE STAFF MEMBERS IN FARM AND HOME DEVELOPMENT:

The function of the State staff in Farm and Home Development may be compared to a symphony orchestra. There are times when all instruments play together. At other times some of the instruments are silent while others take the lead. And the instruments that carry the theme play most of the time.

Many factors, of course, are involved in deciding precisely what contributions are to be made by each staff member in Farm and Home Development work. These include the number of persons on the staff with specific competencies, and on-going projects and assignments, to name a few. Likewise, many of the functions of State staff members often overlap, such as in the preparation of work materials that may involve the contributions of many specialists including the extension editor.

The following State staff contributions seem to be necessary if Farm and Home Development work is to be most effective:

Contributions of Administrative Staff:

1. Develop understanding of the basic concepts of Farm and Home Development--including how it differs from other approaches, the reasons for using it, its objectives with reference to helping individual farm families, and its place in the extension program.
2. Inform the public and interested groups of the nature and purpose of Farm and Home Development, and of progress and accomplishments.
3. Continuously give informed, vigorous administrative leadership.
4. Organize a State steering committee, outline its responsibilities, and give it continued guidance and support.
5. Provide guidance to individual staff members on the proportion of time they will devote to Farm and Home Development.

6. Give guidance in adjusting the on-going extension program and existing workloads to release staff time for Farm and Home Development work.
7. Determine additional State and county staff needs and make arrangements to fill staff positions.
8. Assign Farm and Home Development responsibilities to State staff members.

Contributions of State Steering Committee:

It is recognized that the Director of Extension is responsible for policy decisions involved in Farm and Home Development. However, a State steering committee can be of great assistance in helping him to formulate and carry out policies on Farm and Home Development work. The State committee may be composed of administrators, supervisors and specialists representing home economics, agriculture, and youth programs with representatives, where appropriate, from county extension staffs and research and resident staffs of the college. This committee might:

1. Develop and propose policies and procedures on what is to be done, where, when, to what extent, and who is to be responsible for the various phases of the work; how many counties and how many families to work with, criteria for determining families to work with, individual and group work, public relations and the like.
2. Suggest materials and forms needed. Suggest assignments of responsibility for their preparation and revision as needed.
3. Suggest arrangements for continuous training of State staff, preferably before Farm and Home Development materials are prepared. A workshop conducted in an actual farm and home situation is recommended as part of such training.
4. Suggest arrangements for training of county extension personnel as needed.
5. Give overall guidance to the work.
6. Provide for a free flow of information and suggestions to, from, and among:
 - a. all State extension personnel
 - b. all county extension personnel
 - c. research and resident staffs
 - d. college administrators
 - e. county extension sponsoring groups
 - f. farm organizations
 - g. the public

Contributions of Supervisors:

1. Continuously give informed, vigorous supervisory leadership to Farm and Home Development.
2. Help county staff members:
 - a. develop an understanding of the concepts of Farm and Home Development.
 - b. develop an appreciation of the need for Farm and Home Development and its place in the extension program, and thereby motivate county staffs to use it as an extension teaching method.
 - c. explain the objectives of Farm and Home Development to county advisory councils and county governing bodies, and in soliciting the support of these groups.
 - d. analyze and manage time allocation, schedules, programs, and workloads to include Farm and Home Development work.
 - e. coordinate their efforts in the use of this method.
 - f. obtain the necessary training to assure competence in the use of the Farm and Home Development method.
 - g. recognize and interpret countywide program implications resulting from Farm and Home Development.
 - h. plan and determine ways to evaluate Farm and Home Development work.
3. Serve as liaison between State specialists and county staff on needed assistance.
4. Work cooperatively with specialists toward coordinating the efforts of the total State staff in Farm and Home Development.

Contributions of Specialists:

1. Help county staffs prepare to teach farm families the specific facts, principles, relationships, and skills necessary to success in the courses of action they choose.
2. Assemble pertinent facts, materials, and teaching aids and make them available to county workers.
3. Present subject matter in such a manner that agents and farm people can effectively relate it to the subject matter from other fields that bear on the same problem.

4. Arrange and present subject matter in such form that it is fully and readily useful to farm families in comparing alternative courses of action in relation to their aspirations and the land, labor, capital, and management ability they possess. This usually requires making provisions for estimating costs and expected returns from changes in enterprises, equipment, methods, and practices, and requires a close working relationship among specialists.
5. Work with administrators, the steering committee, and other staff members in preparing and revising handbooks, workbooks, and other program or training materials.
6. Assist in determining and in providing the kinds and amounts of training needed by county staff members to enable them to do effective Farm and Home Development work.
7. Act as consultants to agents on problems requiring information beyond that which the agents can provide in order for a family to reach a sound solution. This often can be done by correspondence. At other times it will require visits with the family.
8. Train and equip agents to help families implement their plans.
9. Inform other agency and industry counterparts of Farm and Home Development, explaining objectives of mutual interest and encouraging cooperation of their field forces in giving service assistance where needed to effectuate farm and home plans. Keep such counterparts posted on Farm and Home Development progress.
10. Assist the State staff in developing recommendations on how to handle problem situations found in the counties. This might be done through State staff clinics as problems arise, thereby lessening the probability of such problems hindering State progress. Involved or questionable practices are types of problems which may require clinical action.
11. Serve as liaison with the research staff on problems that come to light in work with families, and make suggestions for needed research.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

The foregoing outline lists many State staff contributions to Farm and Home Development work. There are, however, other contributions that are essential if this work is to be effective. These contributions are listed as follows:

Farm Management and Home Management Specialists:

1. Jointly take the lead in teaching agents the concepts and the use of the tools of management as applied to Farm and Home Development. These concepts, such as fixed vs. variable costs, and tools, such as

the partial budget, are essential when the farm and home unit is being analyzed to discover problems, alternative courses of action are being compared, and choices are being made with given goals in mind. Management specialists are, of course, dependent on other subject-matter fields for a very high proportion of the information they use in teaching agents these concepts and the use of management tools. Good teamwork is essential here if training of agents is to be effective.

2. Help other specialists organize their information so that it is useful in comparing alternatives.
3. Prepare materials and forms for use in working out appropriate business arrangements between parents and children.

State 4-H Club Staff:

1. Assist all extension workers in recognizing the specific farm and home problems that arise from the goals of older children and from the goals of parents on behalf of younger children.
2. Assist supervisors and agents in developing measures of youth participation in the development of the farm and home. Typical measures might be recorded observations, youth contributions to farm and home accomplishments, and case studies.
3. Develop training materials for use in working with 4-H leaders in relating youth efforts to Farm and Home Development.
4. Develop, with the assistance of other State staff members, materials for agents and local leaders to use in helping parents and youngsters select 4-H projects that contribute to the total farm and home unit.

Information Staff:

1. Work with State and county staff members on informing farm people and the general public about Farm and Home Development, its value, and how the work is to be carried out in the State and in individual counties.
2. Work with State and county staff members on methods of motivating farm families to seek Farm and Home Development assistance.
3. Help develop special Farm and Home Development promotional and teaching materials for use by State and county workers.
4. Assist State and county staff members in reporting Farm and Home Development progress.
5. Work closely with State and county staff members in the development of special Farm and Home Development progress reports such as special editions of newspapers, feature articles, radio and television interviews with farm families, and popular publications.

6. Help State and county workers multiply Farm and Home Development results by widespread reporting of improved practices and technology that cooperating families have proved to be profitable under their conditions.
7. Work closely with other specialists to assure that all program and training materials used in the promotion, planning, and application stages of Farm and Home Development are easy to understand and easy to use.

State Leaders of Extension Research and/or Training:

1. Suggest kinds of training and training methods needed to prepare staff members to participate in Farm and Home Development work most effectively.
2. Suggest resource persons who can assist in providing needed staff training, and help organize and conduct training activities for this purpose.
3. Help State and county staff members evaluate Farm and Home Development work.
4. Help assemble, and help State and county workers apply, extension research and other social science findings that are useful in Farm and Home Development work.
5. Help analyze, interpret, and evaluate Statewide experiences and help apply them in improved Farm and Home Development organization, procedures and methods.
6. Help devise reporting systems and forms, and help interpret Farm and Home Development reports.

Teamwork:

Obviously, if the best use is to be made of all the staff resources available, a high degree of teamwork among State staff members must be achieved. There appear to be at least three essentials for good teamwork. These are:

1. The members of the team must understand what the team is trying to accomplish.
2. There must be understanding and agreement among the members of the team on the specialized roles different members are to perform.
3. Each member must know his own role thoroughly, become skilled in performing it, and give informed and sympathetic support to other members of the team.

There are several forms of teamwork among State staff members, including the following:

- (a) two or more staff members work together to produce a joint product. (For example, one or more specialists may help supervisors outline a training conference.)
- (b) one staff member supplies another with information the latter needs.
- (c) offering of constructive suggestions on another's work, thereby helping to improve it.
- (d) helping other staff members learn principles, skills, or facts needed to improve their services to county workers.
- (e) individual workers can often point out a need for contributions others can best make to the solution of problems, or suggest additional uses of material another staff member has prepared.

There are many forms of teamwork. Likewise, there are limits to the number of people who can work together effectively to produce a joint product, even though many persons may contribute useful information. The opportunity to learn useful principles, facts, and skills from each other is limited only by our imagination and foresight. It is important to recognize all forms of teamwork as teamwork, and to recognize contributions made in any form.

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